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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 000352

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OSD/ISA FOR ALLEN/POWERS

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SUBJECT: BGEN ALLEN'S MEETING WITH MFA DPS PISAN MANAWAPAT

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ALEX A. ARVIZU FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) Summary: In his meeting with BGen John Allen, MFA Deputy Permanent Secretary Pisan Manapawat stressed the importance of the long history of US-Thai cooperation to promote stability and democracy within and beyond Southeast Asia. He noted that the high degree of trust and confidence between our militaries was vital during the tsunami response and would be instrumental in any joint discussions regarding military modernization/transformation. Pisan agreed that the next US-Thai Strategic Dialogue session should include at least one day to focus on China and India. He also expressed optimism that the situation in southern Thailand will soon show signs of improvement. End Summary.

PROMOTING STABILITY AND US-THAI COOPERATION

12. (C) Brigadier General John Allen, accompanied by DCM, met with MFA Deputy Permanent Secretary Pisan Manapawat on January 16 at the MFA. Pisan observed that US-Thai relations are solid, but not sufficiently understood beyond the Department and DOD. He stressed that the strength and longevity of this relationship requires nurturing, particularly within the US Congress. Pisan said that Thailand's cooperation with the US in promoting stability and democracy extends far beyond Burma (citing specific examples of Iraq and Afghanistan), and noted that it would be good to make this point better known within the Congress.

13. (C) Pisan agreed with BGen Allen's suggestion that the next US-Thai Strategic Dialogue should include a full day devoted to discussion of Thailand's special position with regard to China and India. Pisan noted that Thailand is the only Asian country to have good relations with both China and Japan. He suggested that Thailand could play a helpful role in promoting normalized relations between Japan and China.

14. (C) Pisan and BGen Allen agreed that the close working relations between Thai and US militaries made possible the rapid coordination of humanitarian response efforts following the tsunami. BGen Allen observed that the lack of a similar relationship with Indonesia had resulted in difficulties coordinating initial relief operations.

MILITARY MODERNIZATION

15. (U) BGen Allen informed Pisan that the primary purpose of his visit was to focus on the process of military transformation and the role of the military in national security. He told Pisan that DOD will host a delegation from the Thai Supreme Command to visit the Joint Forces Command (JFCOM). The delegation will be able to see how the US military is accomplishing its transformation and identify universal principles, that could apply to other militaries regardless of force size or budget.

16. (U) BGen Allen also emphasized the utility of the Defense Resource Management Study (DRMS) as a tool for improving decision-making with regard to procurement, acquisition and resource management.

17. (C) Pisan said that the high degree of trust and confidence between our militaries would be instrumental to any discussions on military transformation. He said that the military is anxious to modernize but noted, "off the record", that transformation of the Thai military should begin with reducing the number of generals on the payroll.

OPTIMISTIC ON THE SOUTH

18. (C) Pisan expressed optimism that the situation in southern Thailand will soon show signs of improvement. He said that the people in the south are generally against the violence, as they are the ones who are suffering its impacts. He stated that the RTG is working to address the roots of problem, noting that the appointment of Privy Council President General Prem has helped improve trust between the government and the local population.

9. (C) Pisan said that improved Thai-Malaysia relations resulting from the recent ASEAN summit will further help the situation in the south.

10. (U) BGen Allen cleared this message.
ARVIZU